

REMARKS

The Office action mailed May 9, 2006, has been received and its contents carefully noted. The pending claims, claims 7 and 12, were rejected. Claims 1-6 and 8-11 are canceled. By this Response, claims 7 and 12 have been amended. No statutory new matter has been added. Therefore, reconsideration and entry of the claims as amended are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art in the specification in view of either JP2000349112A or JP02001047399A and further in view of JP361179434A. The Examiner rejected claims 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art in the specification in view of either JP2000349112A or JP02001047399A and further in view of JP355105334A or in view of JP363293970A and in view of JP361179434A. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that semiconductor manufacturing processes comprising dividing a wafer are known in the art and that it would have been obvious to use a laser, resin and a water soluble film.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is directed to preventing debris from adhering to the circuit and bonding pads when a wafer is divided. See e.g. page 14, lines 28-32, of the specification. Specifically, the protective film is applied where debris will deposit, and later the protective film and the debris are washed away.

None of the cited prior art teaches or suggests applying a protective film to prevent debris caused by cutting the wafer from adhering to the circuit and bonding pads, and then washing away the protective film and debris. JP361179434A is directed to a photoresist technology using an alkaline aqueous solution to remove a water-soluble photoresist film formed on a substrate. Specifically, JP361179434A is concerned with enhancing the contrast by using the resist layer 2, which is soluble in water. This document teaches removal of the resist film and developing as executed simultaneously, after the contrast enhancing layer 3 has been removed. Wholly unlike

this, the protective film of the present invention protects the substrate from debris produced while dividing the wafer, which debris is washed away when the protective film is washed away. Likewise, none of JP2000349112A, JP02001047399A, JP355105334A, and JP363293970A, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests using a protective film to prevent debris from adhering and then washing away the protective film and the debris.

Since none of the cited references teaches or suggests a method of cutting a workpiece which comprises forming a protective film, cutting the workpiece with a laser beam and then removing the debris formed in cutting the workpiece by washing away the protective film, the claimed invention is unobvious.

Therefore, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should properly be withdrawn.

Request for Interview

Applicant respectfully requests either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to **Deposit Account No. 02-4300**, Attorney Docket No. **033773M056**.

Respectfully submitted,
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP



Michael A. Makuch
Reg. No. 32,263

Date: July 17, 2006

1850 M Street, NW, #800
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 263-4300
Facsimile: (202) 263-4329